

## **Truckers' Freedom Convoy 2022**

**Issue:** A group of Canadian truck drivers, their supporters, and other demonstrators are protesting COVID-19 health measures, including the federal government's cross-border and broader vaccination mandates. The protest reflects a range of grievances and narratives, and includes proponents of extremist ideologies.

### **Proposed Response:**

- **Canadians have Charter protected freedoms of thought, belief, opinion and expression, as well as the freedoms to associate and peacefully assemble. While frustrations with COVID-19 are understandable, they do not justify violence or intimidation in any form.**
- **It is not the role of law enforcement to comment on the perceived legitimacy of protests. However, the Government of Canada remains deeply concerned about the rise of ideologically motivated violent extremism, or IMVE, and is committed to keeping Canadians safe.**
- **The RCMP has been monitoring certain IMV extremists groups who have been using the COVID-19 pandemic to spread propaganda, exacerbate social tensions, encourage criminal or violent actions, and undermine trust in public institutions and government. We know that much of the extremism identified in the protests has been fomented from misinformation and propaganda that has gone largely unchecked through social**

**media and other online platforms.**

- **The Ottawa Police Service continue to be the police of jurisdiction. The RCMP is actively monitoring the situation, providing members to support OPS operations, and working closely with its law enforcement partners, including the Parliamentary Protective Service, as well as other domestic and international law enforcement agencies as appropriate.**

## **Truckers' Freedom Convoy 2022**

### **Background:**

#### ***Trucking Convoy:***

Truckers and supporters of the so-called "Freedom Convoy", as well as other protestors, arrived in Ottawa on January 28 and have continued to demonstrate on Parliament Hill. Originally in protest of the Government's vaccination mandate for cross-border truckers and other pandemic-related public health restrictions, the overall objective of the protest is unclear, as there is no leadership structure or political program being collectively advocated. Certain elements in the demonstration are calling on the Government of Canada to "end all mandates against Canadians" and "respect the rights of the unvaccinated."

Various media reporting has observed troubling behaviour by some protestors in Ottawa, including: anti-government rhetoric; racist symbols; harassment of workers and vulnerable people in downtown Ottawa; the defacement of, and defecation on, public landmarks; as well verbal threats towards politicians. To date, the protests have not resulted in riots, injuries or deaths according to the Ottawa Police Service (OPS).

Media has reported that the protestors are receiving funding from foreign sources and the RCMP is aware that several prominent Republicans in the US (e.g. Donald Trump, Ted Cruz and Ron DeSantis) have expressed public support for the convoy. With respect to funding, it is not an offence to publicly provide financial support, which appears to be what is taking place.

At this point, the RCMP is not aware of any national security criminal activity having taken place during the protest.

#### ***RCMP Operational Support and Protective Policing***

The RCMP is playing a significant support role to the Ottawa Police Service. There are now 275 RCMP members sworn in under the Ottawa Police's command. These resources are a pool to ensure that the RCMP has enough long term capacity to support the 50 members that the RCMP's provides daily. To be clear, the RCMP does not have 275 members deployed to support the OPS, rather we have 50 deployed members per day on a 25/25 shift. The pool of 275 sworn RCMP members are to ensure so that the RCMP has the capacity to surge and can relieve members as

needed. The RCMP has not expanded on its commitment, it is pooling names so as to be able to cover the existing commitment. This includes many of the resources that have been on the ground throughout, including three Tactical Groups deployed to provide support at Parliament Hill, the Senate and Rideau Hall. The RCMP also continues to support through a variety of other enforcement functions. These include joint intel/ops teams, Provincial Liaison Teams, and the National Capital Region Command Centre.

Ongoing media reporting notes that there continues to be threats to public officials as well as to the safety of the Prime Minister and Ministers, and other Members of Parliament. Pursuant to the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Regulations, 2014 (RCMP Regulations)*, the RCMP is mandated to protect the Governor General, the Prime Minister of Canada, judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, ministers of the Crown in right of Canada, Internationally Protected Persons, and any other Canadian citizen or permanent resident as designated by the Minister of Public Safety.

The RCMP is constantly reviewing and monitoring the protective measures put in place for those under its protection, and analyzes every threat reported to the RCMP. Threats range from offensive (e.g., disrespectful language or insults) to abhorrent (e.g., racist or homophobic), but may not be criminal in nature. If the criminal threshold is not met, the RCMP examines the threats from an intelligence perspective. When the threshold for a criminal investigation is met, the RCMP or the police of jurisdiction may investigate, arrest, and lay charges.

### ***Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE):***

There is a broad spectrum of activities that fall within what is called the “Ideologically Motivated Threat Landscape”. This landscape consists of three general compartments:

1. Ideologically Motivated Threats to the Fabric of Society (Social Cohesion)
  - Individuals and groups who espouse extreme views – including expressions of racism, bigotry, and misogyny – that are ultimately non-criminal in nature and protected under the Charter (e.g. lawful protest, anti-authority rhetoric, etc.)
2. Ideologically Motivated Criminality (IMC)
  - Individuals and groups engaging in ideologically motivated activities which reach the criminal threshold, but which fall short of a national security threat (e.g. hate propaganda, vandalism, mischief, law-level assault, etc.)
3. Ideologically Motivated Criminal threats to national security
  - Individuals and groups threatening, inciting, supporting, or using acts of serious violence against persons or property for an ideological objective purpose, or cause (e.g. terrorism offences, racially motivated murder to instigate a theorized race war, counselling arson of a religious institution for an ethno-nationalist cause, etc.).

The vast majority of activity in this space is non-criminal and would fall within the first category – ideologically motivated threats to the fabric of society. This threat landscape is dynamic and complex as political and sociocultural developments are consistently interpreted through ideological prisms in ways that affect social cohesion (e.g. protests, displays of civil disobedience), political polarization, and the broader threat environment.

Canada continues to utilize existing public safety and national security tools to combat violent extremism, including criminal investigations, with a view to supporting criminal charges where appropriate. Countering radicalization to violence (CRV) efforts, namely those undertaken by the RCMP with regard to standard community outreach activities and those by Public Safety Canada’s Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (Canada Centre). The Canada Centre provides grants and contributions for programs and research on CRV.

### ***Ottawa Trucker Protests***

Media reports indicate that there are several criminal investigations underway in connection with certain individual actions associated with the demonstration – such as bribery, defacing public monuments and harassing individuals. However, at this time, the actions by these individuals have not risen to the level of national security criminality and remain a Police of Jurisdiction matter.

The ongoing concern remains that, as the protest continues the individuals or groups who remain in Ottawa will be those who are among the more ardent supporters of fringe ideology. OPS previously stated that the demonstrators who remain in the city include “highly determined and highly volatile” groups and individuals and that the risks to public safety will continue to grow the longer the demonstration lasts. Media statements by OPS and policing and security experts refer to the risk of violence remains high. On February 6 and 7, 2022, Ottawa Police Service (OPS) began stepping-up enforcement measures including removing structures from Confederation Park, increasing patrols, and targeting fuel and supplies being offered by supporters of the protest . OPS indicated that intelligence to date has seen attempts to bring weapons to the demonstration.

Moreover, the presence of concurrent, supportive demonstrations in major cities across Canada raises concerns. On February 5 and 6, demonstrations were reported in Toronto, Quebec City, and Edmonton. The ongoing demonstration and blockade of the Canada-US border crossing in Coutts, Alberta, saw the first attempt by law enforcement (which included RCMP members) to end the demonstration result in violence against officers and retrenchment by the demonstrators.

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## **Convoi de la liberté des camionneurs 2022**

**Sujet:** Un groupe de camionneurs canadiens, leurs supporters et d'autres personnes manifestent contre les mesures sanitaires prises face à la COVID-19, y compris le mandat de vaccination transfrontalier du gouvernement fédéral et autres mandats plus vastes. La manifestation porte sur divers discours et doléances, et compte des partisans d'idéologies extrémistes.

### **Réponse suggérée:**

- **Le droit de liberté de pensée, de croyance, d'opinion et d'expression, et le droit de liberté d'association et de réunion pacifique de la population canadienne sont protégés par la Charte. La frustration liée à COVID-19 est compréhensible, mais ne justifie pas les actes de violence ou d'intimidation sous toutes leurs formes.**
- **Ce n'est pas le rôle des organismes d'application de la loi de formuler des commentaires sur la légitimité perçue des manifestations. Cependant, le gouvernement du Canada demeure profondément préoccupé par la montée de l'extrémisme violent à caractère idéologique et s'engage à assurer la sécurité de la population canadienne.**
- **La GRC surveille certains groupes extrémistes violents à caractère idéologique qui se servent de la pandémie de COVID-19 pour diffuser de la propagande, exacerber les tensions sociales, encourager la perpétration d'actes criminels**

**ou violents et miner la confiance dans les institutions publiques et le gouvernement. Nous savons qu'une grande partie de l'extrémisme observé dans les manifestations a été fomentée par la désinformation et la propagande largement incontrôlées dans les médias sociaux et d'autres plateformes en ligne.**

- Les extrémistes violents à caractère idéologique font la promotion de leurs messages haineux et de leurs théories du complot qui divisent, à la fois en ligne et hors ligne. Les Canadiens doivent toujours faire attention aux sources d'information qu'ils consultent et, dans la mesure du possible, obtenir des avis et des conseils auprès de sources officielles fiables.**
- Même si elle n'est pas le service de police compétent, la GRC surveille activement la situation et collabore de près avec ses partenaires d'application de la loi, ce qui comprend le Service de protection parlementaire et le Service de police d'Ottawa, ainsi que d'autres organismes au pays et à l'étranger, s'il y a lieu.**

***Si l'on insiste :***

- Afin de fournir quelques précisions sur les rôles, le Service de protection parlementaire est le service compétent lorsqu'il s'agit d'assurer la sécurité matérielle sur la colline du Parlement, tandis que le Service de police d'Ottawa est le service responsable d'assurer la sécurité pour ces manifestations, puisque les opérations liées aux activités d'ordre public qui ont lieu dans la ville d'Ottawa relèvent de sa compétence.**
- Pour leur part, les Missions de protection de la Division nationale de la GRC assurent la sécurité de divers dignitaires**

**canadiens dont la protection relève du mandat de la GRC. Cela comprend le premier ministre et sa famille, la gouverneure générale ainsi que leurs résidences officielles, et des lieux désignés dans la région de la capitale nationale.**